

Transcript offered below unedited

All right. The lord be with you

Also with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Holy and gracious God, we give you thanks for the life of your saints, for the ways they have pointed to you in their generation and have been the lights of the Spirit to the world.

We ask that you help us who are following that same spirit to be those lights in our generation and in our time, so that we may proclaim your freedom, your truth, and your love to every single person that we meet. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Amen.

Amen.

Amen. All right. Just a little bit of housekeeping today.

You'll remember that we were going to do six weeks.

We have to stop this week because next week is the Chrism Mass, and when I planned this out, I didn't know that the Diocesan Chrism Mass was going to be smack in the middle of our Galatians reading.

Should we somehow not make it to the end today, which is my goal,

I will record another one and put it up in our page of recordings. And we'll email everybody to let you know that it is up.

I might even be able to draft one Dana Dowling into that mix if I should I-- Oh, him? Grab me? Moi?

So it's not going to the seventh?

No, this is our last class today because of a diocesan commitment that I have during-

Okay

... that time next week,

which I will miss you all, by the way.

Yeah, we'll miss you.

But if you all liked this, let me know.

My hope is to do more Bible studies as well,

and I'm thinking either a gospel or maybe Philippians.

Philippians is a very good companion piece to Galatians.

So,

if you like this, let me know so that we'll keep it going.

I assume you like it because you're still here.

So unless you've come because you're a glutton for punishment.

All right. So we're going to dive in. Remember where we've been in Galatians.

Paul, the mystic, has had this vision.

This vision transformed his entire life, where he had, he called it an

apocalypse, an unveiling. In that unveiling, he was

given the gospel from Jesus himself that he should

be proclaiming the love of God to the whole world, the freedom of God to the whole world, and in doing so, had to change just about every single part of his life because he was one of the people who was persecuting Christians. Then, in Galatians, we heard about how Paul spent time in his own personal desert, wandering around for years, so to speak, trying to figure out how he would live into this message. And when we see him become very critically important to the life of the newfound Christian church by being a part of the Jerusalem Council and testifying that something like circumcision, i.e. following the law- ... the Hebrew law, should not stand in the way of somebody becoming a Christian. So you don't need to follow something pre-prescribed to be in the way of Christ.

Then in chapters three and four, we looked at how he wove that theology together, in a, what they call the Magna Carta of the Bible. He talks about how there is a freedom to the Spirit that has released us from sin.

And he's not interested in individual sins so much in this letter.

You'll recall, instead, he's treating sin as a force of empire that is pressing down

upon us, an occupying force.

That's going to be really critical when we turn today to what is the opposite of sin, the fruit of the Spirit.

It's not the fruits of the Spirit. It is the fruit of the Spirit. And we're going to talk about why that distinction is important.

So remember, Paul's not that interested in individual sins, though we can have individual sins, so much as he is the corporate sin. And the fruit of the Spirit is not just about us being self-actualized individuals, but rather about being grafted into the same tree that is producing these fruits. Right? So we're going to play around a little bit with that today.

And that brought us to the pinnacle of Paul's proclamation, where he reminds us that in this freedom, we are also freed from distinction of separation, where he reminds us that there is, once we've been baptized, there is no Jew or Greek, neither slave nor free, nor male nor female. We all are one in Christ Jesus.

That is our wrap-up to get us to this point where we have started chapter five. Anybody need any clarification or have had a thought or your own apocalypse during the week that we've been together that you'd like to bring up before we dive in?

Okay. All right. Hearing none, we shall continue.

We left off in chapter five.

We had gone through verse six.

Nope, we went farther than that, actually.

We went all the way up to verse

So I wonder if somebody would be willing to read verses

through Verses

through

All right, Clark, I think I saw your hand first. Thank you.

*"Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of
the flesh.*

For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the

Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh.

For these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what

you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are

not subject to the law.

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication,

impurity, licentiousness, idolatry,

sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy,

anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions,

envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like

these. I am warning you as I have warned you

before, those who do such things will

not inherit the kingdom of God.

*By contrast, the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, generosity, fulfillment,
gentleness, and self-control.*

*There is no law against such things, and those who belong to Christ
Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and
desires.*

If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

*Let us not become conceited, competing against one another,
envying one another.*

Thank you.

All right. What did you hear?

A lot, right?

Yeah. Cynthia, please. Cynthia, then Clark.

Well, I was going to say, I like my translation better-

Okay

...

because it refers to sinful nature

instead of flesh. And I'm like, God gave me

this flesh, and I think it's kind of nice and it's a gift

and... But sinful nature, yeah.

That's a problem.

This is critically important, Cynthia. Thank you. I like your translation as well.

Thank you.

And it's actually, I think, a more faithful translation than the word flesh. So sometimes when translators are making their choices, they have to choose word for word, and sometimes they choose thought for thought. Right?

And in this case, when you see flesh, they've chosen word for word because Paul is using this in much more of a Greek philosophical understanding. Right.

We hear in Plato and Aristotle that there's the spirit and the flesh. There's good and bad. There's dark and white. Right.

So he's already kind of making a mockery of the flesh is bad, but we lose all that in our translation when we just say flesh. Right? Because he wants us to remember that the flesh is the thing that's under oppression.

By that, we mean the part of ourselves that still is living, as though we're groaning under sin.

And so your translation, I think, is a much better one.

Will you say it one more time for those of us who want to make sure we internalize it?

Live by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the

sinful nature.

Yeah.

What translation are you using?

Uh...

She says, "Good question." Cynthia, I think you've muted yourself unwittingly.

Okay. She'll look it up, and while she's doing that, I'll say this.

The other piece of the-- You hear the word desire.

The way that Paul gets translated here is where things like

flesh and desire get a bad rap in the Christian tradition,

when they're poorly translated. Because desire is actually,

as we've already heard in Galatians, is actually a

good thing when we wed our desires with God's desires.

It's that when we allow ourselves to have desires that are wrapped up

in that list of things he just mentioned, all

the sinful pieces, those desires will lead us away from

God. So it's an important distinction. Cynthia, and it looks like we found you.

Oh, yeah, it's the New International version.

Thank you.

I like that.

This is a Bible I got off of Hattie's book cart.

Hey.

And I love it. It's a student Bible.

It got me reading the Bible again. So thank you, Hattie.

How do you know the best translation? The one you'll actually read.

That's it. Thank you, Hattie. Wonderful.

Clark, you had your hand up. Please.

Yeah. It threw me the first time here, taking this

literally. The

flesh has a list of

bad things, and I think I'm not alone

in saying I occasionally have, let's see, anger, envy,

some of these things that are listed.

Carousing.

I have pretty much all of the spirit things.

So I don't want to read this literally.

I want to read it as a mix, because I think- ...

that's how we

really are in life. Nobody is entirely

free from what he

labels the works of the flesh.

Yeah.

Yo, carousing sounds like fun.

Why can't I do that?

Who doesn't need a little

envy every now and again, right?

You're so right, Clark. What you're lifting is that there is both a literal component to some of these and a spiritual component, and Paul wants us to remember all of that.

When he brings up the flesh, he's helping us remember that it's not just enough to think good thoughts. We do have to live it.

What's his word he uses? The orthoproté. Right?

Paul is not going to say freedom in the spirit means anything goes, as you can tell.

It's much more about using these things as a litmus test.

When you see yourself doing them, or when you feel yourself getting drawn to them,

or when you're just even thinking about them in some cases, when we use Jesus's litmus test of even if you think of doing harm to somebody, you've committed murder in your heart, right? It's the idea of the depth of spirituality, that if we have these things, again, we're using them for our own purpose.

Let me use anger as an example Anger is not something that the heroes of the Bible seem to be without.

Mm-hmm.

Many of them... Think of the prophets. Oh my gosh, so angry.

Yeah.

Think of times when David went riding into war.

Even Jesus, oh, turning over the money table changers.

It's not that the anger itself it's bad.

It's that when the anger becomes the thing we cling to and

make it our identity outside of our identity of Christ, that's

the problem. Because anger can motivate us to

see injustice in the world and want to do something about it.

But it can't be the defining piece of who we are.

People should be able to see the peace in us that is

greater than the anger. So you're right, Clark.

Yes, will we all have these? Even Jesus had anger.

But it's a matter of how even our desires can be

turned over to God. Yes, Marjorie, please.

Hi. There was a sign in the St. Columba

office decades ago that said, "Bless my anger, for it

tells me I'm alive."

It's a Celtic saying, and I love the

idea that it's a life force.

Mm-hmm.

So

all these qualities of... It's when it

separates us from our relationship with-- When we're out of right relationship, right?

That's it exactly.

Can you be carousing and be in right relationship?

Jesus went to a party, I think.

He threw a party.

You're right.

A wedding.

A wedding party. I forgot.

Yeah.

That's what I meant. He was there, yeah.

So Marjorie, this is so good. And by the way, that is so Celtic, isn't it?

The Celts held on to the curses as well as the

blessings. And the

life force, I love that phrase you used, life force.

Let's take another one, for example.

Fornication. The desire to

be even in a physical intimate relationship with another human

being

is the same sort of life force that is creative energy.

It means that we want to help bring forth, hopefully, in the

right use of it,

love and tenderness and intimacy.

And it is creative life force itself.

And this is the sort of piece that I find so fascinating, how Paul is able to

choose things that if you have it in the right

light can be used even to God's purposes, even the things we might say are

negative. But it's how sin often works.

Sin typically comes in and takes something and just puts a little

twist on it, just enough of a twist that our

anger will suddenly go from being anger about injustice

to anger about this one person I know, that always does this

thing, or doesn't give me the attention I want. Whatever, right?

It's amazing how these things can be twisted.

And so what Paul wants to say is, if you have all this freedom,

you might start thinking you can do whatever you want.

You could use even your good qualities

to whatever means you would want.

But that's not how we're supposed to use our freedom.

And so how do we know when we're in good

relationship with one another or when we're in dangerous territory?

He's going to move us there in a moment.

Amen.

Yeah. Other thoughts? Yeah, Harriet, please.

Harriet and then-

I think one of the things

I've gotten out of reading Galatians with

you, with everyone, is sort of this

three-part nature of our spiritual

history that begins with a promise to Abraham

and then comes in the law. And it's this whole concept of

the law as being a response to the Jews not

fulfilling the promise, and now the law is being

superseded by the Spirit.

Mm-hmm.

That's a concept that I'm getting from

Galatians.

And isn't that amazing? Because what you've just also

described is the human maturation process in general.

First, when we're a baby, what we have is our family

relationship. The Abrahamic family relationship, if you will.

Then when we get older, we have to learn right and wrong.

We need to have the disciplinarian that Paul talked about last week.

Something to teach us.

And then really when we get to be a true mature adult, we're

facing gray areas all day, every day.

Like what is right? What is wrong? How do I make that judgment?

And so what you're describing is how Paul says God, as

our parent, has been doing that with us throughout history.

So it's a micro and a macro event that you're describing. Thank you, Harriet.

Dad, please.

Yeah, kind of

thinking back on what Clark said too, it's a long list of

sins there,

of which I resemble some of those.

And there's a list of the fruit of the Spirit, and at the end of it

says, "Against such there is no law." And I think

the law tends to, if you want to rely upon the law, the law

tends to

focus more on the negative aspects of human nature.

The fruits of the spirits are more of the love and the acceptance and the

gentleness, the self-control, of which there is no law of that.

Have more of it.

That's it. It makes me think of two things.

One, if anybody is a student of psychology, you know that that

science is about years old or so, give or take.

It's still a pretty young science.

And for most of the history of psychology,

we have been focusing on the diagnostic side.

Like when somebody is in distress, when they're having a mental illness, trauma, et cetera, we try to figure out what's wrong and how to fix it. That's a very Western mindset of how to do things.

We do that in our medicine as well. Like how do we treat something that's wrong? Another way of it is a new branch of psychology that's about years old, or give or take, called positive psychology, that is trying to take the same principles of psychological study, but instead focusing on resilience and health, like mental health, and saying, "How do we grow in our capacity of these things?"

We actually need both, right? We need the good scientific diagnostic for when something's going wrong. Paul's given us a good diagnostic list here of, if these things are stacking up in your life, these separating patterns,

and they're causing problems, you probably know you might need some help.

And on the other hand, there's this whole mature piece that you're saying, Dad.

It's like you can also grow in the capacity-

Mm-hmm

... of the spirit. Which I think for so much of us

post-Enlightenment

religious people, we've been taught to focus on the sin a

lot. Sinners in the hands of an angry God, right?

Most of our traditions have been taught to think about the fire and brimstone, you're a cursed sinner, go to hell sort of piece.

And I'm not trying to suggest we shouldn't ever think about sin and

really think about our humility and

our complacency in these sorts of things. It's important.

It's why we have a whole season of Lent.

But in the Christian tradition, Lent is

days, Easter is days, right? The idea of growing in

resurrection love is supposed to outweigh the

parts of ourselves that just focus on the negative and the

judgmental piece. Not just for ourselves.

Again, none of this is just for individuals.

Paul wants us to then remember that then we get to pass this same freedom

of resurrection love on to others. Isn't that beautiful?

You see how big this-- It's all about widening the capacity

for the spiritual maturation for the world,

widening our capacity to be Christ in the world. Yeah.

It's interesting, too, Hil, because I've always noticed that

our Catholic brothers and sisters, they really tended to

concentrate more on thou shalt not.

And even the crucifix cross they have shows

Christ at the moment of his sacrifice, right?

Bloody and beaten and stabbed. The

Episcopal, the Protestant church, have the cross after Easter. It's empty.

And I think it's a different focus.

It's a small thing, but boy, really, to me, it's very symbolic

of where you put your stress.

That's right. And Paul wants us to have both, right?

He spends a lot of time talking about the crucifixion and why

if we don't contemplate it at least sometimes, we

turn this to cheap grace, forgetting how much that sacrifice cost.

And yet, he also says it's not just the crucifixion, it's the

resurrection that makes this possible for us.

We've died and have been reborn with Christ.

That's the baptismal piece that is so central to

Paul's ideology here.

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

The last thing I'll say before we dive into the fruits themselves.

One of the things I've really been kind of caught up with this year is I read a

very short, it's an excellent little

collection of the sayings of St. John Chrysostom.

It's called "Living Simply." It's like this book.

You can get it off of Amazon, "Living Simply." St.

John Chrysostom is known as the Golden-Tongued One because his sayings were so pithy and so beautiful, and because he was very much a prophet in his day. He was the one that would preach

right at the emperor saying, "Hey,

give to the poor." And she didn't like it so much, so that's how he died.

All that to be said, he has this bit in his writings

about living simply where he says we come into this

world with nothing, and we leave this world with nothing, right?

Everything we have is a gift that is basically

on loan from God.

Except, and I've never heard the except before.

He goes, "Except the virtues." The virtues we actually

keep with us as something that is grafted into

us. Why? Because they are the very nature of God.

They are the

eternal thing. Everything else is finite, but these

gifts of the spirit are ours for eternity because it's

God growing within us. So when we die,

it will just keep growing. That part of us, if there's something

of what a soul is, it's probably these virtues and these gifts of the

spirit that we continue to try to grow and magnify as our true self. Isn't that fascinating?

I'd never heard that before, that we get to keep something.

Right? Fascinating, no?

So, let's see. Let's see what we might grow and keep for the rest of our eternal lives.

Let's read that list of... Well, before we do, any other questions about the vices, the vice list here?

I mean, they're fun, I know. It's the fun list.

Okay. Then let's turn again to the actual spiritual gifts themselves.

Verse I'll just read it here quickly for us.

"By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love,

joy, peace,

patience, kindness, generosity-"

Eight

..."faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

There is no law against these. And those who belong to Christ have

crucified the flesh with its passions and desires, and now we

will live by the Spirit."

See the wideness here, right?

Mm-hmm.

The interesting piece is that there's a Trinitarian focus

here. All of these gifts have been created by God.

We are accessing them by nature of the Christ

within us and in our baptism, and they are put within us

to grow as a fruit of the spirit. So what do you hear

in that

fruit of the spirit

list? You

might notice first that it's fruit, not fruits plural. Right?

That's a hard one to readjust, by the way.

I was calling it fruits of the spirit for years and years.

One of the reasons that

this is becoming more important to the Paulian scholars is because

some are trying to decide if Paul sees the

Holy Spirit's work as flowing through love, since love is the first one

on that list, and we know from his other letters, like Corinthians,

"Love is patience, love is kind." A very similar sort of

list. Many scholars are wondering if Paul equates the

Holy Spirit with the energetic force of love.

I think that's not a bad interpretation of how we can read

Paul. For him, love is not just

cupids and hearts like we talked about last week with agape.

Love is the very nature of creation

itself. It's the thing that flows through everything.

If God is anything for Paul, it's a force of love in the world

that Jesus then manifests with his life and that the Holy Spirit then

works through us. So you might say joy, peace,

patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control are all

outpourings of the Holy Spirit, which is love.

So love is the primary piece there. What are your thoughts on that?

Yes, please, Flory, go ahead.

I think you might be muted, my friend.

It's also Jesus's commandment to love thy neighbor,

which makes all those other things possible.

Bingo.

Yeah.

We may think we're a really patient person,

but that may be because we haven't been around somebody who's tested our

patience for a while. You can

have all of the self-control in the world until somebody puts your

very favorite food in front of you. You know what I'm saying?

Like it's

really easy to have all these things, but the love is

what makes it possible in the face of things that would test it, that would make us

not choose these sorts of things. So I think you're really right.

And of course, Paul, knowing that great commandment of Christ, would really want to weave that together. The other important piece that you're pointing us to here, Flory, is

the Shema, which is the summation of the law, of the Hebrew law, is "Love the Lord your God."

A hero-

Right

... Israel will love the Lord your God.

So Paul, very wisely here, is

using the language of the primary law to

instead then weave in something that is freedom from it.

So

think of amazing move he's done here. It's like a chess player.

He's not saying that love found in the law is bad.

He's not even saying what the law wants us to do is bad.

He just says it's not the fullness of what love can be.

Mm-hmm.

Love can be even more, even greater.

And so he's calling us to take the law and explode it even further.

Claire, please.

Well,

I'm taking in

your point that Paul is

talking in

the sense of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is love. But I must say,

just personally, this morning I was so

angry,

sinfully angry,

at

our president for saying, "Don't worry about Easter.

Pass this law, for Jesus' sake." I

just thought, "How dare he?"

Absolutely.

And

then I thought, "But I'm supposed to love him."

Bringing this to on a personal level,

I'm supposed to love him. And I tell you, I was

outside walking, and

I felt this freedom when I reminded

myself.

Oh.

So it's very-

Mm.

Besides being righteous, it's just helpful in our daily life.

Amen, Claire. And this is the exact freedom Paul is talking about in the entire letter.

The anger you're pointing to, you might call that a righteous anger. Like we were talking about a moment ago.

There's a reason you're angry because of the injustice of it, you could say the hypocrisy of it, you could say even the anti-Christian nature of it all. So there's a part of you that's angry in the way that the prophets get angry. And that can motivate you to go back to the law of love, not the law of man, but the law of love.

Mm.

And the freedom you found then lets you have the fruit of the spirit in real-time.

It doesn't mean that the world has been changed in that moment, but it has a little bit because it's been changed within you.

In the neuroscience world, we talk a lot about neural pathways and mirror neurons. Mirror neurons are these fascinating things within the human brain that if they see a human being doing something,

they will mirror it within your own brain.

So for example, if you see somebody freaking out or getting into a fight, your fight, flight, or freeze will be triggered within your brain, even if it has nothing to do with you whatsoever.

This is why we get scared at scary movies.

It's because our brain is being kind of tricked into a mirror neuron. But what you're talking about, Claire, and why this is so critically important, is if you're able to find a place of freedom, peace, and love within yourself, even in the midst of a world that is making that difficult, then somebody who is going to encounter you next will encounter somebody who is equanimous, who is not going to add violence upon the violence, who is going to instead bring peace, even though it'd be way easier to bring more war and pain. So Claire, thank you.

Mm-hmm.

You just described exactly how this works. Beautiful.

What a miracle today, my friend. Thank you.

Beautiful.

Mm-hmm.

So Paul chooses deliberately the word love, and the fruits that he chooses are extremely deliberate.

I can't tell you how many citations there are between other

places within the Bible. You probably, if you have an annotated Bible, you'll see. We've got Corinthians, Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Timothy, Timothy, Peter, Peter, Revelation.

You can tell Paul cares a lot about this because it's in all of his letters in some form, in other words.

Paul really wants us to understand what it looks like to do the orthodoxy, the walking the walk of a Christian, to live by freedom, and he knows it's going to be hard to figure that out, so he puts it in especially all of his pastoral letters to the people he knows and loves and cares about with a pastor's heart.

But instead of just exploring how Paul spoke about them, I thought it'd also be fruitful, pun intended, to look at where he got his source material, which are centered in the actions of Jesus. No surprise there. The first one, let's talk about agape love for just a moment.

We've talked a little bit about it, but it's still worth mentioning.

To do that, I invite us to turn to Luke

Chapter verse Now, if you hate flipping through your Bible, I'm going to read each one of these, so don't you worry about it.

But Luke

says this:

"And when Jesus drew near to the city," that city

is Jerusalem, "he wept over it, saying,

'Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.'"

The word here for peace and love really get wrapped up in how deeply Jesus is crying over the city, Jerusalem.

Here we see him weeping because we know that he's about to walk into destruction, but not just his alone.

Jerusalem has been a place where the prophets have been punished over and over again, and that they have not been able to fulfill the love that God has been trying to pour upon that city for years and years.

So this particular betrayal that Jesus is walking into as he walks into this

Jerusalem city, walking towards his death, is the form of love that Paul calls us to time and time again.

It's not just performative, let's say like a legalistic sort of love, one that Paul talks about in Galatians itself.

This is God's passionate desire for peace but not punishment, even if we deserve it.

Mm-hmm.

That's the kind of love Jesus is talking about here.

What do you all hear in that love of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem?

Well, take it as an invitation to think about the love of Jesus through the whole rest of Holy Week. Because the love is the foundational piece of why Jesus takes every step that he does.

His orthodoxy is a walking in love.

So take that with you as your contemplation.

Let's move, though, to joy. Chara, charitos, chara.

For this, we're going to look at John

John

That word in Greek, that chara, that is the joy, gladness, and the source of a joy.

So when we talk about joy in the Christian context, we're not talking about it as the same thing as happiness.

Happiness is fleeting.

The thing that makes us happy one minute may not make us happy the next minute.

If I had a huge bowl of ice cream right here, it would make me happy right now, and then if I ate too much, I'd not be happy later.

But joy is the thing that abides

in a place that cannot be shaken. Not to use this word in Lent, but when we describe in the Christian

tradition of even at the grave, we make our song, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah," that's joy.

The peace that knows that we are founded in something deeper than just this any one moment or any one desire. Joy becomes important when we're contrasting that with desires that would pull us away from God, in the flesh, so to speak, desires that he mentioned a moment ago. Joy, if we can align our joy with God's joy, then our desires are aligned with God's desires.

So in John we can hear Jesus talking about this.

This is in one of the great seven I am statements from John.

It's the, "I am the vine, you are the branches" one.

And he says in verse "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled." May be full.

What do you hear in that?

Hmm.

That word abide is a really strong, powerful word.

It means to

be a part of, to live with.

I remember, I think in Ruth, it has that when Ruth was talking about where she was going to live with.

But abide means to stay

It's not something that's fleeting.

It stays with you.

*It's a joy. The difference between
happiness and joy.*

Mm-hmm.

Happiness is fleeting. Joy is-

*It's grounded. Claire, I'll come back to you in one moment, but I want to say
something about this. Notice the metaphor Paul is using here.*

It's fruit of the spirit like a tree.

Like something that comes from a deeply rooted tree.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul will again return to the metaphor

of an olive tree, and in this case, he'll use God as the

tree dresser, somebody who actually tends to these

trees forever and ever. And olive trees can last thousands of

years. There are some on the Mount of Olives that are still there from when Jesus

was there. Incredible.

Mm-hmm.

This deep-rootedness, though-

Mm

... takes a very

skilled dresser of trees or vineyard

tender in his metaphor here.

For example, Paul talks about taking off a limb from that well-established old tree and grafting on a wild oak tree into that same tree. And it actually benefits both the tree and the branch, because the branch can keep flowering and give new fruit from that well-tended root system.

And the tree itself, the DNA can change a little bit because it takes on a kind of wild quality, the healthiness of a wild tree.

Kind of like a mutt from the pound often has a better immunity system than just a purebred breed. This is the same thing with a tree when it gets grafted into a wild tree. But it takes a very skilled dresser of trees to know how to do this, and it takes years.

So to your point, Dad, what Jesus is trying to say here is he wants his joy to be grafted into the disciples here, to abide with it as a fruit of the spirit that can be cultivated. That's the other thing.

Sometimes when we think of these fruits of the spirit, it's just given to us once and that's it.

Mm-hmm.

These can be cultivated. They are cultivated.

You can have a healthier crop by tending to this and letting God tend it further. Claire, please, you had your hand up a moment ago.

I like the grafted image. But

my first

thought was

God pouring his joy into us.

Mm.

Just

being super generous, just loving us so much,

just pouring it in.

I hear in that the living water that Jesus talks about.

I hear in that baptism. You're so right.

There's an overflowing font of goodness here. Yes.

Kathy, please.

Oh, Kathy, you might be muted.

There, I was trying to unmute.

There we go.

Yeah. This reminds me of the recent

walk with the monks-

Yes

... as they were coming down Wisconsin Avenue toward the cathedral, that they had such joy.

*They had such peace from this
incredible walk that they'd done, but they were also suffused with joy,
and it was contagious because the crowds, as
they passed, were all saying, "Thank you."
Some were throwing flowers. And so that's what this passage reminds me
of.*

*Amen. It goes back to that if it's in us, we can give it to
others. That each one of us is cultivated to widen this for
others, and they were. They were so peaceful and happy.*

*You're so right. Speaking of peace, the next one is
peace. The word here
can actually mean oneness, which is
beautiful. That's one of the ways the Greek word is used.*

*So if you think of
the opposite of peace as division.*

So Paul is using peace as oneness, unity.

Makes sense with what he was saying earlier in the letter.

*And peace can mean quietness and rest and
just the word peace itself. We hear this a lot in John and
Philippians and Colossians, but I would like us to take a look at Mark*

He says,

"Why are you so afraid?

Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to

one another, "Who then is this, that even the seas

obey him?" And before that, in he said, "He

awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace, be

still.' And the wind ceased, and there was a great

calm."

Mm-hmm.

So here, notice that Jesus brings

peace,

and the first word recorded after his resurrection in

John we could flip there to is,

"Peace be with you." Amazing when you think

about the fact that

all of the disciples he's appearing to, except for the women,

basically denied him and ran away and left him

on the cross, and his first word is, "Peace be with you."

Something-

Mm-hmm

... to think about. This guy-

Mm-hmm

... can come back from the dead, and here we are. Should we be afraid? No.

Be at peace. Also remember that the number one commandment in the Bible is "Fear not." Every single time we're confronted with an angel or a vision of God, like Paul himself was, the first thing that they want to say to us is, "Fear not, be at peace," so that we aren't so wound up in our fears that we can't receive the revelation that God wants for us. Peace is not just an inner state. Peace is the pathway to prophetic work, because if you are only triggered and afraid all the time, it's very difficult to then-

Mm

... be a prophet in the world. Peace is prophetic. Thoughts on peace here, Jesus giving us his peace.

See how each one of these is tied back to Jesus?

Mm-hmm.

It's Jesus's joy. It's Jesus's peace.

It's Jesus's love.

We said earlier in Galatians that it wasn't that we had faith in ourselves, it's that we had faith in Jesus's faith. This is what it means, right?

That we give ourselves so into Christ that we have faith in his faith.

Yes, Wendell, please.

*One of my thoughts
about this that just
popped back into my mind is our Muslim
brothers and sisters have just
completed the Ramadan season,
celebrated Eid al-Fitr, and I have been in,
actually, Saudi Arabia during Ramadan.*

*And I saw
my friends
fast. No water, no food,
from daybreak to
nightfall.*

*And what that was intended to do, and in many cases
sustained, was contemplation. Was a kind of peace-*

Mm

*... that involved denial, but also
a reward by not focusing on material things,
but prayer and contemplation
and celebration at the end of the
fast.*

That's right.

It really brings us to another one on this list, self-control. Right?

Fasting is also a practice in that, in growing in that piece as well.

Right.

You're so right, Wendell. When we pray like Jesus prayed, and he fasted a lot, he went out in concentration a lot, he was in nature a lot. He was in community and ritual a lot.

When we pray like Jesus prayed, we can also then live as Jesus lived.

And so trying out those prayer practices is a way to keep developing the fruits of the spirit. Yeah, thank you, Wendell. Great point.

Yeah.

Yes, Anne. I'm sorry, Dad, I think Anne has her hand up, and then we'll go back to you. Go for it, Anne.

Oh, I think you're muted, Anne.

There we go.

I think this part where he says peace, it's true probably when he says peace in other areas, too, but it just exudes a comfort automatically. I could just see the everything calming, the disciples calming. It's just like a radius of calm and comfort.

And remember, they're in the middle of a huge storm. They're about to die.

And Jesus rebukes the wind, a word that he uses a lot to rebuke his disciples, demons, nature when it needs to calm the

*heck down. And so sometimes, you're so right, Anne,
there's a peacefulness, but let sometimes Jesus interrupt the fear
cycle that you're in, right?*

Mm-hmm.

Let him rebuke you a little bit to snap you out of your fear.

*The way the brain works, is that we get caught in a fight,
flight, or freeze when we're triggered by it for about seconds.*

We're flush with those hormones, that cortisol rush.

*After those seconds, we can keep going in that direction, which our
brain prefers because then we will keep running,*

fighting or

freezing, which might be helpful. But it may not be.

And so the

*way to develop that is to come up with a spiritual
practice that helps turn off that mechanism.*

Breath work, meditation, prayer, calling on the name of Jesus.

Right? Let Jesus rebuke you out of that.

Okay, Dad, I think you had your hand up, and then I see Marjorie and Jim.

Go for it, Dad.

No, I was just going to say that

*if you notice that the boat is rock- These are experienced sailors and they're
worried about dying because the seas are so bad.*

The Sea of Galilee was really whipped up.

Jesus is sleeping.

Mm-hmm.

Talk about peace. How much more peaceful can you be? Yeah.

Tell you what, I want that kind of peace.

Yeah.

Marjorie, please.

Well, this is probably beyond what we're currently discussing, but I

keep thinking about the love and God gave

his only begotten son because he so loved the world.

I have a lot of trouble understanding how,

over the years, how crucifixion

reflects love.

Mm.

I just am troubled by that.

And I think the whole idea of atonement theology,

which I've mentioned also, troubles me.

I struggle with that.

Well, you-

So when Paul talks about all of the

love and the fruit of the Spirit, I'm

struggling.

Well, I'm glad you brought that up.

Atonement theory is a pretty recent addition to Christian

theology. Recent as in,

last to

years. So not baked into

the first understanding of how this works, right?

Yes, there was an understanding of atonement through the temple practices, et

cetera.

But what we've taken to really focus on that at is the

simple blood sacrifice as ritualistic exchange, right, for

atonement theory.

When Paul is using it, it's not just about that.

In fact, Paul is trying to say the law no longer

needs this atonement, right? If you don't have the law, you don't

need blood sacrifice anymore. The entirety of

blood sacrifice was there

because uh-People had

no other way of understanding what it meant to be in reconciled

relationship with God. And in fact,

the reason Jesus was crucified was not a--

He wasn't crucified simply because of His religious beliefs.

He was crucified for His political beliefs.

Crucifixion was a political death.

So when we think of the love of God, we think of Jesus being willing to

step into our system so much that even when

religion gets it wrong, even when politics get it wrong,

even when we get it wrong,

Jesus doesn't abandon us because of the wrongness of the

system. Jesus will go with us to the very ends, even where other people are

being harmed. So you're right. It's a different emphasis,

where the emphasis on atonement theory is on the wrong syllable, let's say. Right?

Jim, and then Lena, I saw your hand after that.

Mine, I was just applauding

Marjorie's question. I have been going through

my mind, everything in my mind, what we've discussed and how Paul

sees these things, and we have to trust, have

the faith in the faith of Jesus and not faith in Jesus,

and I've kind of wrapped that around my head.

But

still, the end of the day, I am still troubled

why Jesus had to die on the cross the way He did.

You should be troubled by it, because Jesus died because of the human nature of all

of us. Like we killed Him.

But I have to be grateful, right? I do. But...

The salvation--

Yes, let's unpack that a little bit.

We

have gotten it a little bit backwards when we talk about

Jesus

dying for our sins in some way, that that was what God

demanding by way of like atoning sacrifice.

And I can understand why we get this wrong, because there is scripture here that

points us to

looking at this as the final atonement of the ritual

sacrificial system.

But that's not the main point. The main point is much

more that Jesus was willing to be with

every part of human condition and

would be with us even though we ended up killing Jesus.

It's not that God wanted Jesus to die.

That's not what God's desire was. The desire

was for us to know God and for God to

know us so completely that we see that there's no longer any

separation. So Jesus has become so one with us,

even in the darkest, hardest, worst parts of us.

To die on a cross was the most shameful death that you could

*imagine. That there's no place God won't go,
even death itself, to find us and to be with us.*

*So the emphasis on Jesus having to die
forgets about the emphasis on all of us getting to live.*

*That's the piece we should be focusing on more and more
and more. Not that we forget the crucifixion, but that
the point was that the story wasn't done there.*

*The story is about the fullness of the life that we shall
live. Because nothing, not even death, that would God
but separate us. Jim, thank you. You've been very patient with your hand.*

Thank you.

It's fine. I just wanted to share a revelation I probably had about minutes ago.

Great.

*One of the beauties of our Episcopal liturgy
is it's very participatory
in our music, in our prayers, in our responses.*

*But we don't interact with our fellow
worshipers except when we
share the peace of God with one another.*

Yes.

Yeah.

The greatest act of Christian family, too. Sorry, Jim, keep going.

No, that's all I wanted to say. That's it.

You're so right.

Yeah.

This passing of the peace was so important to the early Christian church that they would greet each other as family.

It wasn't just a very polite little hello handshake.

It was a kiss on the lips as family would back in the day.

The place that we maintain this liturgically when we shake our hands with one another is so powerful because it happens right after confession. When we jump up and get to say,

"Oh, the peace be with one another." The sin that we were worried about is gone.

So we jump up and we embrace. That is the peace of one another. And we obtain this best in the wedding ceremony, where people still, you may kiss the bride.

That happens in the-

Yeah

... liturgical tradition at the passing of the peace, right where it comes in that part of the service, because they are now family.

You see how cool that is? You're so good, Jim. It's good to lift that up.

Great. Lena, did that answer your question, Marjorie?

Yes, it did. It did, Charlie. Thank you very much.

Oh, no. It's an important piece. We're heading into Holy Week.

It's an important piece.

Okay. I knew it was going to take seven weeks to get through the Spirit. We're almost at time. So let's do patience, and then I'll be patient, and you all be patient.

And Dad, can I graft you into recording one last one with me at some point?

Sure. It'll be fun.

Thank you. Dana, Dad's the man. There we go. Okay.

The last one we'll look at is Mark

He says,

"Jesus, aware of this, said to them, 'Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Have you not perceived or understand?

Are your hearts hardened? Having

eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?

And do you not remember?"

Jesus here has to have a lot of patience with his disciples.

They are getting it wrong. He's basically using that word rebuke again. And yet it may sound to us like he's not very patient, but

he's being patient with them. This is about the third time they've talked about bread. Anybody who follows the Episcopal

liturgy and lectionary, year B in the summer

is bread discourse summer. It's bread this, bread that.

Bread, bread, bread, bread, bread.

And You might laugh at that or get exasperated about it

if you're the preacher,

but then you see how it actually lays out in the teaching of Jesus, and it's back

to back miracle of the feeding, back to back talking about leaven

and bread, and by the end of it, the disciples are still like, "I guess it means

this? I don't know." And he's still

patient enough with them to be like, "All right.

You haven't gotten it yet. Let me try again." The

patience of Jesus, the word

itself in Greek means patience, forbearance, and

long-suffering. Long-suffering.

I think that patience is not a virtue that many of us live

by in this country very often. And

I was always taught, Dad, do you remember this expression?

Don't pray for patience because you just might get it.

Get what you pay for. Right.

That's right, you'll get what you pray

for.

The patience, though, here is that

it's, one, Jesus' patience with us.

It's going to take our entire lifetime and then some to understand who Jesus is, what he means by all these things.

But he never gives up on us, the patience there.

And not just for the comprehension.

We will never comprehend the wideness and breadth of God's love and mercy.

But also, the patience in letting us figure this out.

Advent is a great season for thinking about this.

In Advent, we think about the way God has been trying to call

us into the kingdom of

God since the beginning of creation, and we spend a lot of

time instead in our little kingdoms that we create ourselves, being like,

"Yeah.

That sounds like a good idea, but I'm going to do it my way."

Right. God has patience with us to continue history, to

let us keep trying this out and being the fruit of the Spirit to the

world. Jesus could've come again.

The last time he left, it was only three days.

It's been a little longer than three days.

And there's a goodness to it because God is patient with us,

letting us do the work of building the kingdom of God

here and now in our time and our place.

So if God can have patience with us, we can have patience with God,

right? Jesus not coming back yet means that we have to then be actively waiting for the return of God as well.

Mm-hmm.

And that's the piece that I think we can sometimes forget when we're like,

"Why is all this bad stuff happening? Where is God?"

Why isn't God fixing it?" I think God would look at us and say, "You

have the fruit of the Spirit. You are baptized-

Yeah

... into Christ. Why aren't you fixing it?" Yeah, Lena, please. Go for it.

I think it's also thanks to the Episcopal Church

that there is this emphasis of the kingdom of God is

not when after we die. We are all supposed to be

in the business of making it happen here and now.

So true, and very Pauline of you to say that.

In Paul's letters, he talks about being the ambassadors of Christ.

That is a word used by the Roman Empire to mean that you're

a little mini emperor of Rome everywhere you go, establishing the law,

establishing the water system, bringing

all of the pieces of Rome to a place.

As ambassadors of reconciliation, we are bringing a little bit of the kingdom

of God and setting it up every place we go.

It is here and it is now because we are those ambassadors.

Thank you.

All right, friends. Well, this has been wonderful to be with you all for this

Lent.

Dad and I will bring you one more pre-recorded, so keep an eye on that webpage that

has all of the recordings on it to get the

crescendo of chapter six with all the fruits of the Spirit.

And again, I hope this has been helpful for you all, and you've enjoyed it.

Let me know, and we can do more of these in the future.

Yes. Thank you.

It's been wonderful. Thanks very much.

Thank you, Hillary, and thank you, Hillary's father, Daniel.

Yeah. Thank you very much.

Nice to meet you. Thank you all. It's been a treat to

have Dad here.

It's been.

Blessings to everybody. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you all. Thank you, Hillary.

Thank you.